

CHAPTER 273.

Passed
Mar. 10, 1854.

AN ACT to provide a remedy against free negroes who may hire for a stipulated period to any person, and quit the service of such person after entering on the same, and to provide a remedy against persons who may employ such free negroes, with the knowledge that they had previously hired to another, or engaged in another's service.

Punishment
for leaving
service.

SECTION 1. *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Maryland,* That if any free negro who shall hire himself or herself to any person, and shall leave his or her home, and quit the service of the employer before the expiration of the time the hiring is to terminate, without reasonable and proper cause, he or she shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor, and may be punished or dealt with as hereinafter provided; the said employer may have a warrant to be issued by any justice of the peace, on application, to be directed to any one of the constables in the county, in the name of the State of Maryland, for the apprehension of such free negro, returnable on or before a day to be named therein, or not exceeding ten days from the issuing thereof; and on the apprehension of such free negro, immediate notice shall be given by the constable to the employer, and the said justice of the peace, or in case of his absence, resignation or death, any other justice of the peace, convenient to the parties, shall hear and try the said complaint, and give judgment as to the right and equity appertaining; each party to have the benefits of witnesses, to be summoned as in other cases before justices, and attached for non attendance, if attachments be demanded; and if the judgment of the justice shall be in favor of the State, it shall be that the said negro shall serve the said employer for the residue of the time stipulated or agreed upon between them, and that the costs and expenses shall be paid by the said negro, and that the lost time shall be deducted from the wages agreed upon, and that such costs and expenses and allowance for lost time shall be a lien on the wages, and shall be retained thereout, and costs paid by the employer to the persons entitled to receive the same; that the oath of employer to the contract, and the evidence of some other person that the negro acted and engaged in such service shall be taken as prima facie evidence of the